

## Henry Lee to Andrew Jackson, September 14, 1826, from Correspondence of Andrew Jackson. Edited by John Spencer Bassett.

### MAJOR HENRY LEE TO JACKSON.

Buffalo, September 14, 1826.

*dear Genl.* I have been in this neighbourhood some days, vewing or reviewing the falls of Niagara and examining the various Battle scenes on the Canada side; having it in contemplation to write a history of the last War. On my way I visited and conversed with Govr. Clinton to whom I was recommended and by whom I was treated with much civility. His standing in the political world renders him an object of interest, and I proceed to give you the result of my observations. He is frendly *in his conversation* to your election and adverse to that of Adams; Still more so to the succession of Clay In answer to questions from me he said "Adams has but little influence or popularity in this State". "Clay has few partisans and no prospects in this or the eastern States." "Jackson has some friends in N. York and in ohio I think he stands well." His expressions were altogether favourable to you, and decidedly hostile to Clay, but I am convinced from the whole tenour of his remarks that his object is to secure his own elevation at the next election if possible or the succeeding one at any rate. He would go as far as I could wish in reprobating the origin the doctrines, the practices, and the character of the incumbent administration, but he would never concur with me in the conclusion which I frequently presented for his adoption, that it was necessary for every conspicuous and enlightened patriot to support you as the only man who was now able to effect their overthrow. Here he was uniformly hesitating and evasive—saying "Jackson will beat any man in his own state and probably in Pena." As soon as I was satisfied that his mind was obstinately bent on this selfish object, I said according to my present sentiments Govr. Clinton, you may rely on my exertions to support you

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against Mr. Clay should he attempt to succeed Genl. Jackson. This remark obviously disconcerted him, and our conversation soon after glided into general subjects. Speaking candidly to you, I fear he is a man essentially little—nothing noble and disinterested in his composition. An occurrence happened while I was with him, which though trifling appears to me perfectly illustrative of his imbecility. While we were engaged in this political confabulation, and when it was rather interesting to him, a rap was heard at the door. He told the servant to “carry them back”. The visitors (one of whom turned out to be a judge of the State, passed right by the door of the room in which we were and if they had have looked round might have seene us. Clinton stopped in the midst of a sentence as they passed, and shrank himself up into a corner of the room to prevent their seeing him. This I thought as little like a great man and as much like a little man as any thing I ever witnessed. It is impossible to concieve that Genl. Washington, or (if you will pardon me) Genl. Jackson ever exhibited such weakness.

I was surprised to find the conversation of Clinton, far below the style of a well educated gentleman. His manner[s] are heavy and his language quite provincial. For example he told me Mr. Monroe and his Cabinet “had all tried *for* to crush him”. The canal however is a lasting and a grand monument to his fame. No traveller who sees it without seeing Clinton can help feeling gratitude and admiration for its Chief promoter. Travelling is cheaper in this state and more comfortable than I ever found it elsewhere You live in the best style all the way, and are conveyed from N. york to this place a distance of 507 miles in 6 and ½ days for \$13.62½. and you may come comfortably for 10 dollars. You ought to have a canal from the Tennessee to the Alabama. . . .